

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 176  
By Jackson

A RESOLUTION to urge Congress to fund the National Veterinary  
Medical Service Act.

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee's animal agriculture is at increased risk of losing revenue due to animal diseases, including intentional acts of agro-terrorism and bio-terrorism, because of its many rural communities unable to support the services of a licensed veterinarian; and

WHEREAS, this state and this nation are facing a shortage of practicing large animal veterinarians that could devastate the animal agriculture economy due to the economic difficulties faced by recently graduated veterinarians in addition to the realities of practicing large animal veterinary medicine as opposed to companion animal medicine; and

WHEREAS, many veterinarians do not practice large animal medicine due to the limited opportunities to practice the full spectrum of veterinary medical training, the focus on production agriculture, and perceived quality of life issues that lead them to seek other career opportunities; and

WHEREAS, these issues exacerbate the problem of attracting recently graduated veterinarians who already face significant fiscal deterrents due to the educational debt to become a veterinarian, the debt of establishing or buying into a large animal veterinary practice, and household expenses; and

WHEREAS, approximately 65 percent of each graduating class from The University of Tennessee, College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM) has an educational debt; the average educational debt of UTCVM students in 2004 totaled over \$80,000; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress enacted, but never funded, Public Law 108-161, the National Veterinary Medical Service Act, which authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a loan repayment program regarding the provision of veterinary services in shortage situations, including underserved areas, which would alleviate this growing crisis and aid animal agriculture across this great Nation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this body strongly urges the United States Congress and the Tennessee congressional delegation to fund the National Veterinary Medical Service Act, thereby providing the much needed assistance to veterinarians, the animal agriculture industry, and rural communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared and sent to the President and Clerk of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and the entire Tennessee congressional delegation.